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Message Text

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ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ISO-00 SS-20 SSO-00 SP-03 L-03 INR-11

RSC-01 DRC-01 /062 W
---------- 030513
R 221130Z AUG 74
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6138
INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
AMEMBASSY RANGOON
AMEMBASSY SAIGON
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 13623

STADIS//

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: ASEAN
SUBJECT: US-ASEAN ECONOMIC CONSULTATIONS

REF: A. STATE 176399 B. MANILA 9701

FOR DEPUTY SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

1. APPRECIATE OPPORTUNITY GIVEN TO COMMENT ON PROPOSED USG ECONOMIC CONSULTATIONS WITH ASEAN. IN MY VIEW THE PROS CLEARLY HAVE IT OVER THE CONS. I ALSO BELIEVE THAT RTG WOULD WELCOME THIS INITIATIVE BY THE USG AS A SIGNIFICANT INDICATION OF ASEAN'S GROWING PRESTIGE AND RECOGNITION.

2. AT SAME TIME I MUST WARN AGAINST ANY ABRUPT OR EVEN EARLY END TO OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH THAILAND. A MULTILATERAL ECONOMIC FORUM IS AN EVENTUAL GOAL I SHARE BUT THE WEANING PROCESS SHOULD BE GRADUAL. BECAUSE OF OUR STATED NEED TO KEEP

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A SUBSTANTIAL MILITARY PRESENCE IN THAILAND FOR AT LEAST

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AS LONG AS THE INDOCHINA CEASE FIRE REMAINS IN DISPUTE,
A SPECIAL BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP WILL REMAIN ESSENTIAL IN
MY OPINION. MOREOVER, IN ANY APPROACH TO
ASEAN WE MUST AVOID AROUSING THAI SUSPICIONS THAT WE ARE IN
ANY WAY SEEKING VIA THE MULTILATERAL FORUM TO ESCAPE THE
BILATERAL COMMITMENT WE HAVE ALREADY MADE TO THE RTG TO
ENTER INTO A BROAD RANGING REVIEW OF OUR BILATERAL ECONOMIC
RELATIONS AT ANY MUTUALLY SUITABLE TIME. GIVEN THE CURRENT
RTG STRESS ON THE DESIRABILITY OF STRENGTHENING OUR BILATERAL
ECONOMIC RELATIONS AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR THE TRADITIONAL
MILITARY, WE SHOULD LEAVE TO THAI INITIATIVE THE
SUGGESTION THAT ASEAN MIGHT BE AN ACCEPTABLE ALTERNATIVE.

3. THE CAVEAT ENTERED BY AMBASSADOR SULLIVAN (REFTEL B)
AGAINST USING INDONESIA AS A "CHOSEN INSTRUMENT" HAS MY FULL
SUPPORT. ALTHOUGH ASEAN MEMBERS ARE NOT EQUAL IN EITHER
POWER OR SIZE, THE APPEARANCE OF EQUALITY IS ESSENTIAL TO
THE SUCCESS OF THE ASEAN MEMBER COUNTRIES' REGIONAL CONCEPT.
TO MAKE THE INITIAL APPRAOCH THROUGH THE LARGEST AND MOST
PROMINENT MEMBER WOULD BE DESTRUCTIVE OF THE VERY TREND TOWARD
REGIONAL COHESION AND STRENGTH THAT WE SEEK TO PROMOTE.
THE AWAKENING SENSE OF NATIONALISM IN THAILAND THAT
FREQUENTLY MAKES A TARGET OF THE US COULD EASILY SPILL OVER
INTO STIMULATING PUBLIC CONCERN OVER INDONESIAN-US INTENTIONS.
AMBASSADOR SULLIVAN'S FURTHER SUGGESTION OF AN INITIAL
CONSULTATION IN WASHINGTON WITH THE FIVE ASEAN
AMBASSADORS, AFTER ENACTMENT OF THE TRADE REFORM ACT,
ALSO HAS MERIT IN MY VIEW.
KINTNER

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